

# **No. 2 Sanitary Area.**

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**AXMINSTER  
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.**

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## **REPORT OF Medical Officer of Health 1938.**

# **No. 2 Sanitary Area.**

**comprising :-**

**AXMINSTER RURAL.**

**AXMINSTER URBAN.**

**HONITON BOROUGH.**

**HONITON RURAL.**

**SEATON URBAN.**

## **AXMINSTER URBAN.**

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# MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT.

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AXMINSTER,

*January, 1939.*

To The Chairman and Members of the  
Axminster Urban District Council.

Gentlemen,

I have much pleasure in presenting my Annual Report which deals with Public Health matters and the Sanitary Administration of your District for the Year 1938.

As you are aware on Oct. 1st 1938, Axminster Urban District was included in No. 2 Sanitary Area, and I had the honour of being appointed Medical Officer of Health for the combined Districts.

The only difference this makes, is that you have now a Medical Officer of Health, who is not engaged in Private Practice, and who is at the same time, directly responsible to each Council.

It must be remembered in producing this report, that I am rather at a disadvantage, as I have to depend on others for the period of the first nine months of 1938.

## **Natural and Social Conditions of the Urban District.**

Area 1300 acres.

Population 2355.

Number of Inhabited Houses 698.

Rateable Value £18,474.

Sum represented by a penny rate £74 (net).

Axminster is a small Market Town, holding a cattle market once a fortnight on Thursdays.

The chief industries are, Carpet Making, Brush Factory and a Laundry.

Employment given in these factories are :-

Carpet Factory	Males	40	Females	20
Brush Factory	,,	40	,,	26
Laundry	,,	12	,,	50

I am very glad to report, that the general health of the District during 1938 was on the whole very good.

At one period of the year, great anxiety was felt, owing to the fact that 4 cases of Typhoid were reported, but fortunately the outbreak did not reach any serious dimensions, I shall deal more fully with this, later on in my report.

There were also nine cases of Scarlet Fever notified, these however were of a mild type, but to prevent the spread of Infection were removed to the Exeter Isolation Hospital.

It is very difficult to trace the source of Infection in these sporadic outbreaks of Scarlet Fever, however, all infected houses were visited and thoroughly disinfected.

I note with great satisfaction, that the complications after child birth such as Puerperal Fever are entirely absent in the Urban District, no cases having been reported, and I think this speaks very highly of the Nurses, who undertake this work in the Urban District.

### **Prevalence of and Control over Infectious Disease.**

During the year nine cases of Scarlet Fever, six cases of Pneumonia and four cases of Typhoid were reported in the Urban Area.

The cases of Scarlet Fever and Typhoid were removed to the Exeter Isolation Hospital, with which the Council have an agreement to take their cases of Infectious Disease.

The Scarlet Fever were all of a mild type.

The Typhoid outbreak which caused considerable alarm, fortunately did not spread beyond the first four cases which were notified in the middle of August and one the first week in September.

Every possible step was taken to trace the cause of the outbreak but without avail, and I think we must come to the conclusion, it was brought by a Carrier.

No immunisation against Diphtheria has been undertaken at present in the Urban District.

Disease.	Total cases notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Deaths.
Scarlet Fever	9	9	0
Pneumonia	6	0	2
Typhoid	4	4	0

## **Prevention of Blindness.**

No action taken under Sect. 179. Public Health Act 1936.

## **Tuberculosis.**

No action has been required under the Public Health prevention of Tuberculosis Regulations 1925, relating to persons suffering from Pulmonary Tuberculosis engaged in the Milk trade, or under Sect. 172 of the Public Health Act 1936 relating to compulsory removal to Hospital of persons suffering from Tuberculosis.

## Section C. Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

### WATER SUPPLIES.

During August and September 1938 an outbreak of Typhoid occurred in the Urban District four cases occurring in the Urban District and one in close proximity in the Rural District.

There is no doubt a definite shortage of water in the summer months, as the Surveyor reports, that the supply was cut off from August 16th to the end of September. The early part of this period, it was shut off from 10 p.m. until 7 a.m. and from Sept. 16th from 8 p.m. until 6 a.m. He notes also, that the reservoirs were full on May 21st and from that time until about October 15th, they did not fill again.

Prior to the outbreak, samples of water had been regularly taken by the Surveyor, and submitted for Examination. As the reports on the examination of the water supplies would fill a volume in themselves I am condensing the reports as much as possible.

Feb. 21st, 1938.

Furzeleigh Spring No. 1.

Not altogether satisfactory.

„ No. 2. Satisfactory.

Bever Batch No. 1 spring. Very Satisfactory.

„ „ „ 2 „ Satisfactory.

March 25th, 1938.

Furzeleigh No. 1. Satisfactory.

„ No. 2. Very Satisfactory.

„ No. 3. Satisfactory.

„ No. 4. Satisfactory.

„ No. 5. Satisfactory.

„ No. 7. Satisfactory.

Bever Batch No. 6. Satisfactory.

April 14th, 1938.

Tap at Castle Hill House.	Satisfactory.
Reservoir	Satisfactory.

July 13th, 1938.

Springs at Axminster (Reservoir)

B. Coli present in 1 ml

Probable No. Coli Aerogens organisms per 100cc = 80

Colonies growing on Agar (2 days at 37c) = 320 per ml

„ „ „ (3 days at 22c) = 3480 per ml

Remarks. This sample is unsatisfactory bacteriologically. The content of B Coli and related organisms is too high, and the general bacterial counts are excessive.

July 13th, 1938.

Springs at Axminster, Tap at Castle Hill House.

Bacilli Coli present in 1/10 ml.

Probable number of Coli-aerogenes per 100 cc = 600

Colonies growing on agar (2 days at 37c) = 10 per ml

„ „ „ (3 days at 22c) = 180 „

Remarks. This sample is unsatisfactory bacteriologically on account of high content of B Coli and related organisms.

Following on these unsatisfactory samples, your Surveyor on July 26th took seven further samples of water. The report on these stated that they all show evidence of manurial contamination in varying degree, the least unsatisfactory being that from Bever Batch Springs.

The samples were taken as follows :-

Sample 1 Inlet at Reservoir. B Coli present in 4 ml

Sample 2 Large Reservoir. B Coli present in 1 ml

Sample 3 Small Reservoir. B Coli present in 1 ml

Sample 4 Furzeleigh Springs. B Coli present in 2 ml



Sample 5 Bever Batch Springs. B Coli present in 10 ml

Sample 6 Furzeleigh small spring. B Coli present 5 ml

Sample 7 Spring above settling Tank.

B Coli present in 1 ml

On the 10th August, following on these reports, Messrs. Manscrgh & Sons reported that they had given consideration to these reports and it appeared to them, that the sources from which the water is obtained, are not deep seated and may therefore be expected to be somewhat sensitive to surface pollution, and they are also of opinion, that the Bever Batch sources are somewhat superior to Furzeleigh.

They further state, that in view of the liability of the sources to some periodical contamination, consideration must be given to the means whereby the water as supplied to the consumers can be rendered perfectly safe at all times, and suggest Chlorination, as it would be the cheapest and most effective in this case.

Following on this report, a Chlorination plant was installed, and the water supplies have been chlorinated as from August 19th, 1938, and a sample taken on September 13th, 1938, was quite satisfactory and a sample taken from a tap in Axminster on 17/10/38 was reported as satisfactory bacteriologically, B Coli being absent in 100 ml, and probable number of Coli Acrogens organisms per 100cc. Nil

Colonies growing on Agar 2 days at 37c- 8 per ml.

„ „ „ „ 3 days at 22c- 40 „ „

## **DRAINAGE & SEWERAGE.**

There has been no important extension to the present scheme.



This is not a very satisfactory proportion.

### Vital Statistics.

### BIRTH RATE TABLE.

1938.—14·0                   ,,                   ,,                   ,,

In addition I beg to report 2 still births.  
(Legitimate)

### DEATH RATE TABLE.

1938—11.0                   ,,                   ,,

### Infantile Mortality.

The number of deaths (under 1 year) registered were 4.

### **Pulmonary Tuberculosis.**

The number of deaths registered from Pulmonary Tuberculosis was 1, and Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis 0.

### **Deaths from Cancer.**

The number of Deaths from Cancer registered were 3, as compared with 4 in 1937.

### **Causes of Death Table.**

	MALES	FEMALES
All Causes	16	10
Ac. & Chr. Nephritis	1	0
Con. Deb. & Prem. Birth	2	1
Other Defd. Dis.	1	2
Cerebral Haem.	1	0
Heart Dis	3	4
Pneumonia	1	1
Other Resp Dis.	2	0
Diarrhoea under 2 years	0	2
Cirrhosis of Liver	1	0
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	1	0
Cancer	3	0
Total	16	10

### **Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age.**

	Males.	Females.
Legitimate	2	2
Illegitimate	0	0
Total	2	2

### **Live Births.**

Legitimate	33
Illegitimate	0
Total	33

### **Still Births.**

Legitimate	2
Illegitimate	0
Total	2

## **General Provision of Health Services for the Area.**

### **Section B.**

Axminster Cottage Hospital (10 beds) and the Public Assistance Institution, Honiton.

The Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, The Eye Infirmary, Exeter, and the Princess Elizabeth Orthopædic Hospital Exeter, admit cases from this Area.

### **Tuberculosis.**

Cases are admitted to Ivybank Exeter, and the Hawkmoor Sanatorium Bovey Tracey. These Hospitals are provided by the Devon County Council.

### **Maternity.**

Cases are admitted to Axminster Cottage Hospital when beds are available, also to the Public Assistance Institution Honiton.

### **Diphtheria, Enteric and Scarlet Fever.**

Are admitted to the Exeter Isolation Hospital, at Whipton, near Exeter. The Council having an agreement with Exeter City Council to admit their cases.

### **Small Pox.**

The County Council have made arrangements to deal with any cases that occur.

An Infant welfare Centre was started in 1937.

### **Laboratory Facilities.**

These are all provided by the County Council, and no difficulty is ever experienced.

## **Professional Nursing in the Home.**

The Axminster Nursing Association provides a Nurse for the District, which includes Musbury and Raymonds Hill of the Rural District, she is a certified Midwife. Infectious cases excepted.

## **Midwives.**

The control and inspection of Midwives is now undertaken by the County Council.

## **Ambulance Facilities.**

Local St. John Ambulance Division man and equip their own Ambulance for General use.

Another Ambulance supported by voluntary contributions and stationed at Honiton is always available, and is staffed by Honiton V.A.D.

Infectious cases, Whipton Isolation Hospital send their own Ambulance.

The Medical Officer of Health and the Sanitary Inspector are whole time Officials.

## **Prevalance & Control over Infectious Disease.**

Diphtheria Antitoxin is used by all the Medical Practitioners in this Area, and is issued free to those, who cannot afford to pay for a supply.

The County Authorities undertake the Bacteriological Work for the District.

Non-Notifiable Disease. This is rather difficult to report on as the only basis to go on, are the reports of absence from Schools, supplied by the Head Teacher, and I have no statistics to work upon, for the period under review.

All arrangements for Treatment of Tubercular Patients, who desire Sanatorium treatment, are made by the County Authorities.

I append the Tabulated report of the Sanitary Inspector, Mr. Biggs.

I am indebted to Mr. Pike for the water reports.

## SANITARY INSPECTOR'S RETURN.

### Inspection and Supervision of Food.

#### Meat and other Foods.

Number of pounds of Meat surrendered—1422 lbs.

Visits to Slaughter Houses—208.

The Slaughter-houses consist of 4 Registered Slaughter Houses.

Beasts inspected :-

Bovines :	Cows	87
	Cattle	15
Calves		39
Sheep		305
Pigs		300

Meat Surrendered :-

	T.B.	Other Disease & conditions.	Total.
Beef	600 lbs.	lbs.	600 lbs.
Pork	800 „	„	800 „
Offals	„	22 „	22 „
Totals	1400 „	22 „	1422 „

#### Milk Sampling.

Total number of Samples taken during (Accredited) year—7.

Number Satisfactory 2.

Number Failed 5.

Total number of Visits to Farms and Dairies—23.

**Bakehouses.**

Number in District 4.

Number of visits 8.

**Infectious Disease.**

Number of Houses disinfected for :-

(1)	Scarlet Fever	9
(2)	T.B.	1
(3)	Typhoid	4

**Plans (Submitted and Past).**

New Buildings	3
Additions, Alterations & Extensions	1
Garages	1

**Tabulated Statement.**

Drains tested	9
Drains made good	3
Drains relaid	2
Cesspits repaired	Nil
Sinks provided	4
Floors repaired	5
Stoves Repaired	3
Windows repaired	6
Rooms cleansed	6
Yards paved	2
External Walls Roughcasted	4
Roofs repaired	1
Ceilings repaired	2
New Gullies provided	1
Ashbins provided	17
W.C.'s repaired	1
Flushing Cisterns provided	4

Your Obedient Servant,

DUNCOMBE STEELE PERKINS,

*Medical Officer of Health.*





